**The action adventure part of the exam Questions 1-3 30minutes viewing and note taking**

**Q1)**

**Q1 Will always be in reference to how the extract is from the action adventure genre. 10 marks and you’ll have 8 minutes to write your answer (though you probably already have most of it done in your note taking)**

What makes it an action adventure film? You may have to concentrate on typical or atypical narratives (action), settings (city, night, jungle etc), themes (revenge, justice, good vs evil), icons (weapons)  
  
**ABOUT THE GENRE**

**Storyline and Plot:**  
Tease out the differences between these two terms. Think about the characteristics of Action Adventure films in having fast moving plots which provide plenty of excitement and tension.  
  
**Structure**:  
All Action Adventure films have recognisable narrative structures which offer a way of examining how a story is organised and shaped in terms of time and events. It is interesting to explore the *rules* of narrative structure with regard to Action Adventure. For example a defining feature of narrative is the high degree of narrative closure, with all problems resolved and/or our hero triumphant. So in addition to linear structure, narrative can often be seen in terms of oppositional structure too, as a fight between forces of good and evil.  
  
**Main characters**:  
All Action Adventure films have a recognisable heroic central character, a hero or heroine who is able to overcome incredible odds. Whilst some films feature brave heroines, most narratives are organised around traditional gender roles. Teachers might want to explore the extent to which modern films have challenged traditional female (and male) stereotyping.  
  
**Oppositional characters:**  
Action Adventure films tend to feature characters that play opposite the key central character, for example either in the form of a relationship (hero/heroine) or in conflict (hero/villain).

**Journey/Quest**  
Action Adventure films often involve central characters working towards a final goal (such as seeking treasure). These narratives take place against the backdrop of a variety of exotic and sometimes glamorous locations. These can range from desert landscapes to urban settings. Not only can their use provide the audience with visual pleasures, but the location itself can serve an important narrative function as central characters find themselves battling with the challenges presented by it e.g. surviving earthquakes, struggling, through jungles etc.  
  
**Themes**  
Chase, race against time, survival, revenge, love - why is the action taking place? What is driving our hero/es forward?

**NARRATIVE**  
Narrative led films with tightly woven story arcs, where the dialogue drives the plot rather than builds character.  
An action adventure film is essentially one long quest with a succession of different chase sequences, each one more death defying and seemingly impossible than the one before. The trick for the producers is to ramp up the tension as the film progresses to a storming end sequence. Will our intrepid explorers make it, or will the evil antagonist get there first.

A strong story ark of a quest for treasure, or an incredibly valuable object, or an item which has occult power.

Love interest that both hinders and supports the main quest.

A fast moving narrative with constant set backs that are overcome one by one, leading to fairly complex plots.

In many respects this genre of films derive their energy from being more exciting, more adult and much more dangerous versions of children’s stories of adventure such as **Enid Blighton’s Famous Five** or **Arthur Ransome’s Swallows and Amazons**.

Thrilling action where the protagonist saves his fellow travellers through a variety of non realistic but apparently logical escapades.

**CHARACTERS & LOCATIONS**

* These are not realistic films, although the characters must be believable. They are set in a stereotypical world of the not too distant past e.g the 1930s, or the fictional world of storybook adventures e.g. The high seas of the 19th century.
* A main protagonist who is a recognisably normal guy, and who just happens to have amazing powers of endurance in the face of extreme danger, and is also very clever. Indiana Jones is an archaeology lecturer in an US university. Captain Jack Sparrow is at first an ordinary good for nothing pirate with incredible agility and luck, although he later takes on supernatural powers.
* There are always helpers who are a team of innocent characters who happen to get caught up in the action.
* Humorous dialogue often diffuses taught and sometimes frightening situations.
* The characters take the twist and turns of the plot very seriously as they are often in mortal danger from an assortment of unusual animals, machines and monsters orchestrated by an evil antagonist.
* Exotic locations where the characters have to contend with extremes of climate, as well as evil forces.
* The aim is to please the audience by keeping them on the edge of their seats through a series of mind boggling chases, exotic locations and hair raising adventures in historically inaccurate but somehow elementally possible settings.
* Action Adventure films are designed to create an action-filled, energetic experience for the audience who can live vicariously through the exotic locations, conquests, explorations, struggles and situations that confront the main characters.

**Q2) 20 marks This is where students always spend a lot of time but you only have 20 minutes.**

**Moving image – Camerawork:**   
• Establishing shots   
• Low angle, high angle, canted angle or aerial shots   
• Elaborate camera movement such as tracks, steadicam or crane shots   
• Hand-held camera   
• Point-of-view shots   
• Shallow focus and focus pulls.

**Moving image – Editing:**   
• Shot/reverse shot   
• Non-continuity editing   
• Crosscutting   
• Fast-paced editing   
• Less common transitions: dissolve, wipe, fade   
• Post-production effects.   
  
**Moving image – Soundtrack:**   
• Music   
• Synchronous and asynchronous sound   
• Diegetic/non-diegetic sound   
• Voiceover   
• Sound effects   
• Sound bridge  
  
**Moving image – Mise en scène:**  
• Lighting (especially low-key lighting)   
• Location/set   
• Costume and make-up   
• Props   
• Casting and performance style   
• Blocking (the composition of elements within the shot).

**Q3) This is the representation question:**

At it's simplest, representation is about how people are depicted in the extract. You can look at how other things are being represented such as places, events, aliens, monsters, ideas - but it is best to start with people. Stereotyping is such as big issue in representation that it is often the best place to start. What stereotypes of people do you often find in action/adventure films?  
  
Look carefully at the representations in the film. Do the main characters conform to representations that we can understand as real people.  
Is Robin a hyper real superhero (Superman?) or is he down to earth and essentially human – what events and details display his character.  
  
In any film look at:

* How different genders are represented.
* How different age groups are represented.
* How the representations construct our emotional connection with the characters.
* What effects the representations have on the audience.
* Whether the representations can be interpreted in different ways.